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THE CABLE SECRETARIAT

OTR VAULT COPY NO. 313

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I welcome this opportunity to get together with you today. It serves two purposes: First, it gives me an opportunity to discuss a subject near and dear to my heart—the functioning of the Cable Secretariat; Second, it gives me an opportunity to get away for a few hours from that mad house known as the Cable Secretariat.

Believe me, and [REDACTED] will bear me out, I jumped at the chance to come here today. Having the opportunity to do missionary work with a group such as this—I just couldn't pass it up! It is my hope that today I may be able to acquaint everyone of you sitting out there with what we do, how we help you and how you can help us to help you even more. In helping you to do your job, I will have accomplished what I believe to be a large part of my mission..... to make the job of the Director easier. The Director is carrying a tremendous burden. Failure on my part to expedite the delivery of cables to those offices which need them—makes his job more difficult. If I make his job more difficult, well, it follows that one Cable Secretary will follow another Cable Secretary until that situation is changed. And, frankly, I like being Cable Secretary.

The Cable Secretariat receives and distributes each day an average of 500 classified incoming and outgoing cables. In a month this adds to the tidy sum of more than 13,000 cables. Incoming cables are delivered to the Cable Secretariat from Signal Center for the most part on teletype paper such as this. If 13,000

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messages were all placed on one strip of teletype paper, that paper would stretch from here to the zoo, a distance of approximately five miles. Or another way of indicating the volume of business we do is to express it in terms of words. Originators at Headquarters and in the Field file for transmission each day between 125 and 150,000 words. This is the equivalent of three full-length novels.

This represents a rather staggering volume when you stop to consider that the Signal Center, Office of Communications, must reduce each letter of each word to form a cypher and then to transmit such cyphers thousands of miles around the world. The task of reading, determining the proper distribution, reproducing copies and delivering them is a staggering job too.

That is the job of the Cable Secretariat. It is not an easy job. It isn't a job which is done between the hours of 8:30 and 5:00 each day. No, it is a complex job. It is a job which requires the attention of trained analysts, skilled typists and experienced supervisors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The doors of the Cable Secretariat are never closed. Fire drills, air raid drills, hurricanes—we have someone on the job every minute!!! But, even though we work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, we cannot do the job without your help. We need your advice, we need your guidance, we need to know why you require certain cables on certain subjects. Without your advice, without your guidance, without knowing why, we cannot do the job to the high standards required.

When I came aboard, General Smith made it clear to me that he did not expect my shop to be perfect; but he also made it clear

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that he didn't expect us to make any mistakes!!!

To the extent that we are able to do our job well, it is because we do know why you people need cables dealing with certain subjects. Without fear of contradiction, I can state that we enjoy excellent relationships with every office to which we distribute cables. And I want to take this opportunity to express on behalf of my entire staff our appreciation for the splendid cooperation you have given us. With no intent to boast, I would like you to know that based on a study of 12,000 cables we made erroneous distribution on but 54. This gives us a batting average of .996. I cite these figures as proof of the fact that we know what you need and why you need it.

Incidentally, if Joe DiMaggio had maintained this batting average he might still have Marilyn Monroe.

And now, let's get down to discussing very briefly the history of the Cable Secretariat and why there is a Cable Secretary. General Smith, the Director of Central Intelligence, in July 1952 believed that the distribution of cables should be placed directly under his control as one means of keeping him informed with the least delay. Accordingly, he set up the Cable Secretariat as part of his office and looked around for someone to serve as Cable Secretary. As Mr.

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██████ told you, I served with General Smith for several years during the war. For some unknown reason General Smith happened to think of me on that July day in 1952 and the mere fact that I was at that moment stationed in Georgia didn't deter him at all from getting me

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to Washington within the week. And from that time, July 1952, I have been the Cable Secretary. My mission is fairly well spelled out in [REDACTED] which you have before you.

Perhaps the best way of acquainting you in some detail with just what the Cable Secretariat does is to elaborate, point by point, upon the mission itself.

The first responsibility listed is that of coordinating policies governing the preparation, release, and distribution of CIA cables. That covers a lot of territory. Taken a little at a time, it boils down to the following:

First, Policies Governing the Preparation of CIA Cables. In

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[REDACTED] "Basic Cable Policy", the general policy as to who may originate, who may release, and who may authenticate cables is set forth. In addition, the precedence to be used, the classification to be used, addressees and addressors, and sensitivity and routing indicators are prescribed. The Cable Secretariat's role in the publication of this Regulation was that of coordinating and getting the various interested offices to agree on one policy applicable to all elements of CIA. The Regulation itself is comparable to the law. It tells what can be done but it does not prescribe how to do it. To meet this need, the Cable Secretariat prepared and coordinated Cable Handbook [REDACTED]. In this Handbook we have described in considerable detail how [REDACTED] should be implemented. You all have copies of this Handbook before you. Copies have been distributed to your offices and we are not going to go into the Handbook today—it is a subject complete unto itself. But I did want you to see this Handbook—to know that it exists. I do hope that you will

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become more than casually acquainted with it. I believe that it contains all you need to know about how to prepare a cable--- except, of course, a knowledge of what to say. That book hasn't been written!!!!

You may be interested to know that we are experimenting with a new type of reproducible master which is absolutely clean. It is possible to make erasures with a regular eraser. Unless we run into some unforeseen difficulties, I hope to be able to put these masters into use within the next six to nine months. I'm sure your secretaries will be thankful.

Also, as part of the Cable Secretariat mission, we have been instrumental in inducing the reports officers to prepare preliminary disseminations on our present outgoing cable form. By using the cable form we are able to deliver to the Signal Center a copy for electrical transmission while at the same time use the reproducible master to make copies for internal distribution on a PRIORITY basis.

Policies Governing Release of CIA Cables. ^{25X1A} [REDACTED] prescribes who may release cables. Since all cables from Headquarters are released in the name or the title of the Director, the Director has reserved the right to designate by name those who may release cables. If you have need to get authority to release cables, just remember that the Handbook ^{25X1A} [REDACTED] contains complete instructions on how to go about it.

Policies Governing the Distribution of CIA Cables. The policy governing the release and preparation of cables is just as concise

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as, and perhaps clearer than the policy governing the distribution of cables. Our policy is to distribute cables on a "need-to-know" basis. That is our whole policy. It is, I believe you will agree, concise! It is in the implementation of that policy that we encounter difficulties.

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You will note that [REDACTED] states that the Cable Secretary is responsible for the distribution of cables. In the Handbook we have elaborated upon this responsibility. Perhaps it would be well to go over the cable distribution policy. As a matter of fact, that is the whole purpose of my being here today. If I didn't discuss cable distribution policy, the chances are very good that I wouldn't be invited to address similar groups in the future. And so—on to the policy!!!

I have here in my hand a copy of what we refer to as the Cable Distribution Requirements. If it looks to be about two inches thick, that's about what it is. It is packed full of requirements for each staff office and division to which we distribute CIA cables. It is upon these requirements that we make our distribution. But it isn't quite that simple. You see, distribution of cables is based upon an interpretation of these requirements and upon a determination of whether the individual cable itself comes within these requirements. There is considerable latitude for the exercise of judgment. We try to be as consistent as possible in making distribution and I believe that our batting average of .996 is indicative of just how close we do come. But we do judge incorrectly sometimes. I put

it thus to avoid saying right out that we make mistakes. In any event, if we do make distribution which you question, don't hoard such cables as examples of incorrect distribution—bring them to my attention as soon as possible. Only in that way can we learn where we are wrong and take corrective action.

Determination of the action unit is made by the Cable Secretariat on the basis of subjective requirements, our knowledge of the mission of the authorized action units, and upon approved routing indicators. If you will turn to page 25 of the Handbook you will see that we have given a general introduction to the use of indicators. When routing indicators are apparently misused or omitted, the action unit is selected based on the total information available within the Cable Secretariat. Total information consists of reference cables, requests, alert notices, memoranda—in short, anything and everything we know about cable distribution. When in doubt, or where there appears to be a joint interest but no indicators are used, we usually assign action to the area division having executive responsibility for the originating station. Reference cables and digraphs are used for guidance in making distribution but, they do not in themselves serve to direct action to a unit other than the Area Division having executive responsibility for the originating station. In case some of you may be unfamiliar with what digraphs are, perhaps a little explanation is in order. Digraphs are two letter prefixes used with words or other letters to form a cryptic reference for the purpose of indicating a particular area, staff, or office interest. For example, the

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digraph UK might indicate that Logs Division of DD/A is interested. An amusing incident happened in our office some time ago concerning the use of a digraph. It so happens that there is no digraph UK, but recently one of our hardworking trainee Analysts in a period of concentration said, "Say, something is wrong here,---we have no UK digraph and yet here is a cable using the UK digraph---what gives?" What he had was a cable containing the word UKRAINE. He still blushes at the mere mention of UKRAINE.

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██████ goes on to state that the Cable Secretary is charged with the review, the processing (exclusive of the encrypting, decrypting, and transmitting process) distribution, and delivery within CIA Headquarters of all classified incoming and outgoing CIA cables.

Said all at once, this is bound to be somewhat confusing. Again, let's break it down.

Review. The Cable Secretary is charged with reviewing all incoming and outgoing cables to insure compliance with 25X1A ██████. The bulk of this review is directed at outgoing cables from Headquarters. A Cable Secretariat Duty Officer acting for me reviews every outgoing cable to insure that it has been properly released, is properly classified and clearly addressed. In this connection I feel that I should make clear that with respect to release, the CSDO is responsible only for insuring that the signature of the Releasing Officer is one authorized by the Director for release of cables. He is not responsible for determining that the cable has been coordinated with all appropriate staffs or divisions nor is he

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responsible for insuring that the cable has been released or coordinated with an Area Division having executive responsibility for the station to which the cable is addressed. These responsibilities are charged to the Releasing Officer in ^{25X1A} and in the Handbook. There are some exceptions to what I have just said; namely, if the cable involves a question of National policy the Cable Secretariat Duty Officer is responsible for insuring that the originating officer has secured the personal approval of the Director in every instance. You will note that this is included in the mission of the Cable Secretary in ^{25X1A}. Still another exception occurs in those cables in which the personal pronoun "I" appears. In those instances as well as those cables which are addressed EYES ONLY, the CSDO must check to see that the cable is released by Mr. Dulles, General Cabell or a Deputy Director or the Assistant Director for Communications. It will facilitate matters considerably if you are aware of these responsibilities of the Cable Secretariat Duty Officer as they relate to the responsibilities of the Releasing Officer.

Next we come to that part of the Cable Secretariat function which involves the processing, distribution and delivery of cables. Processing and distribution may be considered as one process or function since they are so closely related. If you will make reference to the chart which has been furnished to you, I believe that I can explain how cables are processed through the Cable Secretariat. You will note that cables may be originated by any one of a number of stations overseas. For security reasons I haven't listed any particular stations and I don't believe it is necessary that we refer to particular stations in order to make clear how we process cables.

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All cables are processed through the Signal Center, Office of Communications, to my shop. Even though my office is a part of the Director's office, we are actually located adjacent to and work very closely with the Signal Center. Upon receipt of an incoming message, the Cable Secretariat Duty Officer reads it very carefully to determine whether it should be distributed to the Director.

If you will refer to the Cable Secretariat Flow Chart which has been furnished to you, you will observe that a Cable Secretariat Duty Officer, shown to the left and immediately within the circle representing the Cable Secretariat, serves as a central hub or point of receipt for all cables. To prevent delays at this point, it is sometimes necessary to use as many as three Duty Officers at one time to cope with peak loads of traffic. Each cable, once a determination of the Director's interest has been made, is routed by the CSDO to either the Secret Section or the Top Secret Section where Cable Analysts begin the first of a series of processing steps. Irrespective of whether a cable is sensitive or non-sensitive, incoming or outgoing, essentially the same processing steps are followed except that the Cable Secretariat does not prepare a master for outgoing cables as in the case of incoming cables. You will note that the Cable Secretariat has its own courier staff making direct delivery to all major points or units. This is done to insure the quickest possible delivery of cables to you. One courier is used exclusively to insure concurrent delivery to the Director and Deputy Directors and other offices in the vicinity of the Administration Building. Four others are required to cover I, J, K and L. Buildings. All

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Cable Secretariat couriers are cleared for Top Secret.

Earlier I stated that I believe that a large part of my mission is to make the Director's job easier. One of the principle means by which my office assists the Director is to select from all incoming and outgoing CIA Cables those which appear to warrant his attention. We then prepare a synopsis of the cable and include in the synopsis, where appropriate, background information insofar as that information is available to us from prior cables. I have been assured that the Director relies heavily upon these synopses and that they represent a material saving in time to him. Most of you have at one time or another read a CIA cable. I am sure that unless that cable dealt with matters with which you were thoroughly familiar, it was almost unintelligible to you. The practice, and I think it is a good one, of using cryptic references in cables serves to further the interests of security. It is our job in furnishing these cables to the Director to furnish them to him in a readable form. This is no small job. If in preparing our synopsis we omit an essential portion of the cable or if we furnish incorrect information or an incorrect interpretation of the information contained in the cable we have made the Director's job more difficult. Our mission is to make his job easier. In order for us to do that we need your cooperation. We often need additional information in order to make the cable readable for the Director. Please remember that when we ask for this information we are asking for it for the Director. Time is vital. We try very hard to get cables to the Director with a synopsis attached within two hours or less from the time they are received in the Cable

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Secretariat. When you consider that this requires that the cable be analyzed, distribution determined, and that it be typed onto a reproducible master, proofread and a synopsis prepared where appropriate, you can see that we don't have a minute to spare. You can help us tremendously by furnishing to us the information we need as soon as possible. I should mention here that our assistance to Mr. Dulles and General Cabell is extended to a considerable extent to [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Mr. Amory and [REDACTED] As a last point in this connection you should be aware that Mr. Dulles or General Cabell are often in on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays. We must be prepared therefore to deliver cables to their offices 7 days a week. I mention this in order that you may be aware of the pressure under which we work to keep cables constantly flowing both to the Director and to the other elements of the Agency.

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As I have said, we attempt to get cables to the Director within two hours of their receipt in the Cable Secretariat. We are able to make distribution direct to the action office and other information offices much more quickly—in fact we have an average processing time during the normal work day of slightly over one hour. This means that you often have the cable an hour or more ahead of the Director. Please keep this in mind when on occasion you feel that you need to discuss a cable with the Director. If there is any doubt in your mind as to whether the Director has received his copies and will thus be able to discuss the cable with you, I should be very happy, in fact most happy, to give you that information and, where

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necessary, to expedite delivery to his office. I am sure you can understand that the Director would much prefer that he have his copy of the cable before him when one of his Staff Officers calls and wants to discuss it. This may seem a small point, but it is one that sometimes gets my office in trouble.

Another responsibility of the Cable Secretary is to insure that all intelligence information in cables is furnished to the Office of the Deputy Director of Intelligence, Mr. Amory. As indicated in 25X1A [REDACTED] the Cable Secretary does not have this responsibility on his own. It is the basic responsibility of the action office to insure that each interested element or echelon of CIA, including the Director, is informed of the content of cables on a need-to-know basis. Both Mr. Dulles and General Cabell have indicated that it is their desire that all intelligence information be furnished to Mr. Amory with the least possible delay. And here is where the Cable Secretary helps get the job done. Those cables which contain intelligence but do not contain sensitive operational information are furnished to Mr. Amory at the time initial distribution is made. Other cables which contain both intelligence and sensitive operational information are not distributed to Mr. Amory, initially, but in effecting distribution to the DD/P elements, a notation is made on the copy that it is "suspended for DD/I" and a suspense slip is attached to the action copy. Upon receipt of such a suspense cable, the reports officer is alerted to DD/I's interest. If the information which we consider sensitive is not in fact so sensitive as to preclude the release of the cable to DD/I, the reports officer authorizes the release of the cable

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to DD/I and we furnish copies to Mr. Amory on the very next run. On the other hand, if the cable is sensitive, the reports officer extracts the intelligence information, puts it into a dissemination of one form or another, and the dissemination is furnished to Mr. Amory. As an indication of just how keenly Mr. Dulles feels on this subject, he had directed that, unless an agreement can be reached between myself and the Area Division Chief to get the intelligence information to Mr. Amory without delay, the cable in question will be referred to him, Mr. Dulles, for decision. Yet, we have had but few instances in which this was necessary. As it happens sometimes, we suspend a cable which does not contain intelligence information. That cable is discussed with the reports officer and is disposed of appropriately.

I must stress here again the importance of speed. The DD/I has the mission of assisting the Director in the coordination of intelligence activities of the Government, as prescribed by statute and NSC directives and for him to do his job it is necessary, in fact it is vital, that he have intelligence information received at Headquarters as soon as possible. Failure to get that information to him quickly may result in an erroneous briefing to the Director or to the National Security Council or even to the President of the United States.

As an indication of the importance ascribed to this particular part of the Cable Secretary's job, Mr. Dulles has directed that a review of one day's traffic be made each month by a representative from Mr. Amory's office. The DD/I representative must be a senior member of Mr. Amory's office who has limited official contact outside of CIA and he must be acceptable to the DD/P. In selecting

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cables for this review certain sensitive cables are withdrawn from the day's traffic. I refer all such cables to the Director's office in order that he may be personally assured that the suspense system is not nullified by the improper withholding of cables from DD/I.

Not included in our mission as set forth in 25X1A but nevertheless a very important part of our job—and one in which we help you—is the role of the Cable Secretariat Duty Officer serving in the dual capacity of Clandestine Services Duty Officer. In January 1953, the Cable Secretariat assumed the responsibility for serving as the Clandestine Services Duty Officer. This function was previously performed by Duty Officers assigned by the Foreign Intelligence Staff. You old timers in the audience will recall how you were called upon periodically to serve as the all night duty officer and to sleep in that little cubby hole near the Signal Center. I am sure, too, that you will recall the real difficulty of deciding whether and whom you should call concerning a project completely outside your area and about which you knew absolutely nothing. Because the Cable Secretariat Duty Officer reads all cables and because we serve, as I indicated before, around the clock, it was agreed that we could very well serve as the Clandestine Services Duty Officer and free the other officers from this rather unpleasant duty. My Duty Officers have been instructed to make calls on all cables with a precedence higher than PRIORITY and to make calls only on such other cables as require action before the opening of business the following day. We do try to keep the calls to an absolute minimum since we

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appreciate the fact that most of you are deep in the arms of Morpheus with no desire to be awakened. My files have a number of memoranda attesting to the excellent job which my Watch Officers are doing in the performance of their duties as Clandestine Services Duty Officer ---and I hope that the file grows daily.

25X1A A recent innovation is the transmittal of cables by pouch instead of electrically. Perhaps you have noted 25X1A [REDACTED] which established what we call the [REDACTED] procedure simply gives to the originator or the Releasing Officer the option of sending copies of cables to information addressees by pouch instead of transmitting them electrically. If the Releasing Officer has indicated that the cable may be furnished by pouch, the Cable Secretariat then prepares an appropriate number of sterilized copies which are furnished to FI/RI for inclusion in the next pouch to that station. 25X1A The entire [REDACTED] procedure has been devised as one means of complying with the Director's orders that cable traffic be reduced by approximately 25%. We hope that this diverting of cables to pouch channels will result in a material reduction in cable traffic.

As one last statistic, you may be interested to know what has been the shortest and longest cable processed by the Cable Secretariat. I believe that the shortest cable was one in which the only word used was the word "NO". The longest one ran to 16,000 words. I don't recall whether it said "yes" or "no".

All speeches, be they long or short, good or bad, or indifferent must end with the statement, "in conclusion and so, in conclusion, if you remember these things about the Cable Secretariat, I will feel

that I have earned my money for today:

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a. The Cable Secretariat is charged by the Director with the responsibility for the distribution of all CIA cables.

b. A primary function of the Cable Secretariat is to make the job of the Director easier and at the same time to make it possible for you to do a better job. To do this, we need your assistance and we need to be informed of your requirements.

c. With reference to the "SUSPENSE DD/I" procedure, the Cable Secretary is merely carrying out the Director's desire that intelligence information be furnished Mr. Amory's Office with the least possible delay, and

d. The Cable Secretariat Duty Officers who represent me also represent the Clandestine Services during non-office hours. We maintain close liaison with the CIA Watch Officers, who serve the Agency.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the operations of my office with you. If at any time you are in the vicinity of my shop, I would be most happy to take you on a conducted tour. If any of you are unaware as to where my shop is located, you merely follow the sign of the purple ink. Perhaps by the time you get around to visiting us we will be using the new and much hoped for clean duplicating process. I thank you!

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